

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

ARCHIVES INFORMATION CIRCULAR

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Raleigh, North Carolina

OVERVIEW OF MARRIAGE BONDS FILED IN
THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE ARCHIVES

North Carolina marriage bonds (1741-1868) were statements of intent for couples who planned to wed. The prospective groom took out a bond from the clerk of the court in the county where the bride had her usual residence as surety that there was no legal obstacle to the proposed marriage. One or more bondsmen signed the bond with the groom to guarantee the bond fee should the marriage prove illegal.

On file in the North Carolina State Archives are at least 170,000 marriage bonds. These bonds were abstracted in the 1930s by workers on a National Youth Administration project, alphabetized by workers on the Historical Records Survey project of the Works Progress Administration, and typed by the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (Mormon).

Most marriage bonds contain the following information: groom's name, bride's name, date of bond, bondsman or bondsmen's names, and witness's name. When a marriage certificate (after 1851) is filed with the bond or when additional information appears on the bond itself, this information is also included in the abstract. Such additional information may include parents' names, date of the marriage, the person performing the ceremony, and similar data.

The information from the county abstract volumes has been combined and arranged in two statewide indexes--one by groom's surname and one by bride's surname. These indexes appear on 88 microfiche. The entries were typed for computer input by the Genealogical Society, staff of the data entry section of the North Carolina Department of Administration, and staff of the North Carolina State Archives. Staff of the North Carolina State Archives proofread all the entries. Copies of the statewide microfiche index are available in the Archives Search Room, at many genealogical libraries, and for purchase from the State Archives (<http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/archives/arch/publica.htm>).

The format for each record and a sample entry appear below:

GROOM	BRIDE	DATE	RECORD	BONDSMAN	WITNESS
BROWN JOHN	CURTIS SUE	03 OCT 1853	073 01 009	THOS BROWN	J JONES
M 06 OCT 1853 BY ALLEN GREEN JP					

To determine the county where the bond was taken out, refer to the first three digits in the "RECORD" column. These numbers correspond to the attached list of North Carolina county code numbers. Additional information appears on the second line of the entry. Because of limitations in space, some names of bondsmen and witnesses have been shortened. Also, on the additional information line, the notation "ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON DOCUMENT" may appear when all of the additional data will not fit in the allotted space. In such cases, the original bond or the county abstract volumes may be checked for this information.

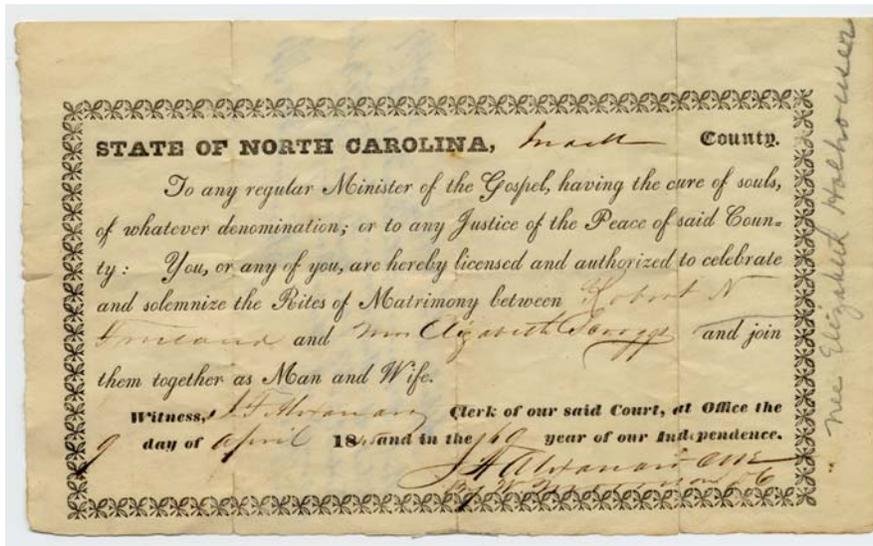
At the beginning of the groom index are approximately 40 bonds which because of a data entry error do not appear in proper alphabetical sequence. This short list of bonds also should be checked when searching for a specific name. Many bonds do not mention the name of the bride. The group of bonds not listing a bride appear at the beginning of the bride index.

The following is a list of common abbreviations:

AMECH	African Methodist Episcopal Church
BM	Baptist Minister
cc	Clerk of Court
CCC	Clerk of County Court
CH	Church
CLK	Clerk
CO	County
COL	Colored (bride and groom were African American)
CT	Court
DC	Deputy Clerk
DEPT CLK	Deputy Clerk
D OF	Daughter of
JP	Justice of the Peace
LUTH MIN	Lutheran Minister
M	Married
MD	Married
MG	Minister of the Gospel
PRES MIN	Presbyterian Minister
S OF	Son of
X	Indicates the person did not sign his name but only made his mark. (This notation is included in only a small percentage of the entries although many more bonds contain marks and are not signed).

These bonds have been microfilmed, and are available on film in the Search Room. Marriage bonds for Granville County are not included in the statewide listing; a published abstract by Brent Holcomb may be consulted in lieu of the statewide index.

Almost all of the original marriage bonds have been microfilmed. Exceptions include Beaufort, Cleveland, Currituck, and Martin counties.



Example of a Marriage Bond

The code numbers listed below have been assigned to North Carolina counties. Marriage bonds exist for all counties listed.

Code No.	County	Code No.	County
001.	Alamance	059.	Lenoir
003.	Alexander	060.	Lincoln
005.	Anson	061.	Macon
006.	Ashe	062.	Madison
009.	Beaufort	063.	Martin
010.	Bertie	064.	McDowell
012.	Brunswick	065.	Mecklenburg
013.	Buncombe	067.	Montgomery
014.	Burke	069.	Nash
015.	Bute	070.	New Hanover
016.	Cabarrus	071.	Northampton
019.	Carteret	072.	Onslow
020.	Caswell	073.	Orange
021.	Catawba	075.	Pasquotank
022.	Chatham	077.	Perquimans
024.	Chowan	078.	Person
026.	Cleveland	079.	Pitt
028.	Craven	080.	Polk
029.	Cumberland	081.	Randolph
030.	Currituck	082.	Richmond
032.	Davidson	083.	Robeson
033.	Davie	084.	Rockingham
035.	Duplin	085.	Rowan
037.	Edgecombe	086.	Rutherford
038.	Forsyth	090.	Stokes
039.	Franklin	092.	Surry
041.	Gates	093.	Transylvania
044.	Granville	096.	Tyrrell
046.	Guilford	097.	Union
047.	Halifax	099.	Wake
049.	Haywood	100.	Warren
053.	Hyde	103.	Wayne
054.	Iredell	104.	Wilkes
056.	Johnston	106.	Yadkin